



masters shows such sweetness to His grateful and faithful servants, especially at a time when gratitude is rare, and when so little eagerness to serve Him and so little true love are found even in those who made profession of loving Him.

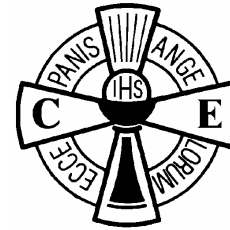
As it is impossible to have this devotion at heart without having great love for Jesus Christ, it would be difficult not to feel in its practice that sweetness and those interior consolations inseparable from the exercise of true love; and as the mere sight of the wounds of Jesus Christ inspires us with great confidence in His mercy, the mere sight of his Heart inspires us with sweetness and joy that can be distinctly felt, but which it is difficult to describe. In truth, it would be strange if one should

approach Jesus Christ, be well received by Him, and not feel the same pleasure as is usually felt when one is well received by the great ones of this earth. If we do not experience this consolation ---- and this is a greater misfortune than some people think, it is because of our want of love for Jesus Christ, because of our great imperfections, our little faith and a hundred other faults. But we can say that as those who have true devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus have none of these faults, all these caresses, all these singular favours ought to be inseparable from the exercise of this devotion.

This has been the happy experience so far of all persons who have been known to be devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and this is still the experience every day of those who imitate them; this is proof that Jesus Christ cannot refuse His sweetest caresses to the friends of His Sacred Heart. It has always been remarked that the Saints who have had most devotion to the Sacred Heart have been filled with most signal favours, and those saints hardly ever speak of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus without using language that lets us see the extraordinary graces and interior sweetness with which they have been filled.

"O how good and sweet it is," says St. Bernard, "to make one's abode in this Sacred Heart. It is enough to bring to mind Thy Sacred Heart, O my amiable Jesus, to be filled with joy." It is by means of this devotion that St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde received such great favours from Jesus Christ. St. Clare assures us that it was to the tender devotion which she had to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that she owed the extraordinary sweetness with which her soul was filled every time that she presented herself before the Blessed Sacrament; and St. Catherine of Siena felt herself all inflamed with the love of Jesus at the mere thought of this adorable Heart. Jesus Christ, having appeared to St. Mechtilde, addressed these beautiful words to her:

"My daughter, if you wish to obtain pardon for all your negligence in My service, have a tender devotion to My Sacred Heart, for It is the treasury of all the graces which I confer on you unceasingly. It is Itself the source of all those interior consolations and of the ineffable sweetness which I lavish on My faithful friends."



Handmaids of Christ and Children of Mary

Supplement to the Bulletin of the Eucharistic Crusade in Ireland

June 2008
Month of the Sacred Heart

This leaflet is intended for high-school girls. Being part of the Eucharistic Crusade, you receive the bulletin of the Crusade and pray for the intentions of the Crusade. As girls, Our Lady is your special model. Therefore as well as being Crusaders and Handmaids of Christ, you are also Children of Mary. The purpose of these few pages is to help you in your spiritual life.

AN EASY WAY TO BECOME A SAINT By Fr Paul O'Sullivan, OP

Chapter 4 - GOD'S GREATEST PROOF OF LOVE (3)

OUR MANY SINS, OUR FAULTS, OUR WEAKNESSES

Seeing then God's infinite goodness and mercy for even the greatest sinners, let us banish our foolish fears and doubts. No matter how weak we are, God's grace will make us strong. Let us have boundless confidence in God's mercy! Nothing pleases Him more than to pardon us, to purify us, to give us His friendship.

Bear ever in mind His Divine assurance, "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow." (Is. 1:18).

Chapter 5 - THE PASSION (1)

We now come to a subject that even the pen of a Saint cannot sufficiently describe, viz., the sufferings and death of our Sweet Lord. Who could have imagined the possibility of God suffering, despised, crucified?

He could have saved us by one word, as He had created us. Why then did He subject Himself to such awful humiliations, such agonies of pain, to that most ignominious of deaths, meted out to only the greatest malefactors----crucified between two thieves, mocked and blasphemed by His enemies!

One drop of His Precious Blood would have saved a thousand worlds. Why then did Our Sweet Lord suffer such pain and degradation? Simply to prove the infinite sincerity of His love for us. And we----careless, insensible, thoughtless, blind---- remain unmoved at the sight of all He did for us. We look on our crucifix and feel no pity for our Crucified Lord. We look on the Stations of the Cross and feel no answering sorrow stir our hearts. He did all that God could do to constrain our love, but our coldness, our incredible blindness nullifies all that His Divine Love did to gain our affection.

Worse still: "By our sins," the Apostle tells us, "we crucify again the Son of God and make a mockery of Him." The Jews had been waiting and praying for the coming of Our Lord for 4,000 years. The Prophets, one after another, foretold the principal facts of His life. He Himself then came and worked astounding miracles to prove that He was God. But at the sight of His sufferings, the Jews were scandalized; they could not believe that God could suffer. The Gentiles, although they saw the wonders He wrought, were no less incredulous. They called it madness to say that God would submit to such outrages.

We know and believe that He is God, that He suffered and died for *each one of us*, yet we are more guilty than the Jews and the Gentiles, for we remain hard and ungrateful at the sight of all that Jesus has done for us. Why do not our hearts burn with love of Him? Because we do not trouble to think on the Passion; we do not ponder on it; we do not love it.

.....

(Continues next month)

Instruction upon meditation

Meditation, or mental prayer, is a devout and fruitful consideration of Divine things, and of all that is conducive to the acquirement of virtue and of eternal salvation.

Refer to the previous issue of this bulletin to learn how to make meditation properly. Remember that as Handmaid, you promised to meditate 15 minutes every day. St Teresa of Avila says that he who spends 15mn a day in mental prayer cannot be lost.

Had you but once entered into perfect communion with Jesus or tasted a little of His ardent love, you would care nothing at all for your own comfort or discomfort but would rejoice in the reproach you suffer; for love of Him makes a man despise himself.

Imitation of Christ, Book 2, Chapter 1 "On Meditation"

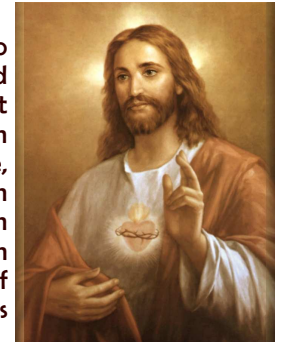
19^h Meditation – On Venial Sin - 1

Venial sin is an offence against God, and therefore is to be avoided, and dreaded more than any temporal evil whatsoever. We ought rather to suffer death than incur the guilt of one known and deliberate venial sin; it can never be authorised by any pretext of doing a greater good.

By every wilful venial sin, we « grieve the holy Spirit of God », according to the words of the Apostle St Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians; and yet of what numberless sins have we been guilty in the course of our lives! May we not truly exclaim with the psalmist, « My sins are multiplied above the hairs of my head. » What numbers of faults proceed from dissipation, from sloth, from freedom of speech, from hastiness of temper, from dislike to others, etc; and how many of these do we commit with deliberation and full knowledge!

WHAT TRUE SWEETNESS AND CONSOLATION IS TO BE FOUND IN THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Although all exercises of devotion can fill those who practice them with interior consolation, and although there are no good works that are not accompanied by the inexpressible pleasure and joy which are inseparable from the testimony of a good conscience, and which surpass all other pleasures, it is however certain that Jesus Christ has never conferred so many favours, even sensible favours, as in the practice of the devotion which tends to honour Him in the Blessed Sacrament. The lives of the Saints are filled with examples which demonstrate this truth.



When was it that St. Francis, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa, St. Philip Neri, St. Aloysius Gonzaga and a hundred others, have felt their hearts more than usually inflamed with love but when they approached this august Sacrament? How many loving sighs, how many sweet tears in the celebration or in the participation of this adorable mystery? With what consolation and with what torrents of delights have they not been filled? And, in truth, as there is no place where Jesus Christ is more liberal, so there is no place where He makes the sweetness of His presence and His gifts more felt. In the other mysteries He gives us His graces, but in this, the first grace which He gives us, is to give us Himself really and truly.

Joy is inseparable from a feast; Jesus Christ has made a feast every day for Christians in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. Are we to be astonished that He treats His friends with so much sweetness and love at this Sacred Banquet?

Now as the devotion to the Sacred Heart makes us true and faithful adorers of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and as it consecrates us in a special way to this Mystery, it procures for us the greatest sweetness from it. One would say that Our Saviour measures the special favours which He confers in this Sacrament by the number of insults which He has endured in it, and that, as there is no mystery in which He has received so many outrages, there is also no other mystery in which He fills with such sweet consolations those who do all in their power to make reparation for these outrages. As the motive of this holy practice is so pure and agreeable to Jesus Christ, we should not be surprised if the best and holiest of all